

## **Proposed Recommendation for Prior Authorization of Selective Serotonin Re-uptake Inhibitors (SSRIs)**

### **□ Purpose**

Prior authorization (PA) of SSRIs is intended to promote use of a low-cost SSRI that is medically appropriate, safe and therapeutically equivalent for the patient. The use of prior authorization by Wisconsin Medicaid is not a formulary. Under PA, all SSRIs remain covered drugs for Wisconsin Medicaid recipients, and all state and federal requirements for coverage of drugs are met through the PA process.

### **□ Proposed Exemptions**

Under the draft PA recommendation for SSRIs, an exemption from PA would be granted o:

- Allow the continuation of existing SSRI therapy for those already on SSRIs (grandfather provision);
- Allow use of high-cost SSRI therapy if generic SSRI therapy has been tried and determined to be ineffective, to cause serious side effects, or is otherwise clinically contraindicated for this patient
- Allow use of high-cost SSRI therapy if there are drug-drug interactions that should be avoided.

### **□ Prescription Drugs in SSRI Class**

- **High-Cost SSRI Drugs Subject to PA**

Celexa® (citalopram)  
Lexapro® (escitalopram)  
Paxil® (paroxetine)  
Paroxetine (generic)\*  
Paxil CR® (paroxetine CR)  
Zoloft® (sertraline)  
Prozac Weekly® (fluoxetine)

\*The PA requirement for this drug will be removed when the net cost approximates the cost of fluoxetine.

- **Low-Cost Drugs in SSRI class NOT subject to PA**

Fluoxetine (generic)

### **□ Proposed PA Criteria for SSRIs**

#### Approval Criteria

1. The recipient is already stabilized on the requested SSRI requiring prior authorization; or
2. Generic fluoxetine is therapeutically inappropriate for this patient for one or more of the following reasons:
  - A. Previous therapeutic failure in this patient of generic fluoxetine
  - B. Previous history in this patient of side effects from generic fluoxetine
  - C. Serious drug-drug interaction likely with concurrently prescribed drug therapy for this patient
  - D. Clinically contraindicated for this patient

#### Denial Criteria

1. There is no documentation of previous therapeutic failure, side effects or therapeutic incompatibilities with other concurrent drug therapy.

## **Frequently Asked Questions About Prior Authorization of Selective Serotonin Re-uptake Inhibitors (SSRIs)**

### **Patient Questions**

- Q: I am already using generic fluoxetine. Must it be prior authorized for me to continue receiving it?  
A: No, generic fluoxetine does not require prior authorization.
- Q: I am using an SSRI other than generic fluoxetine. Must the drug be prior authorized for me to continue receiving it?  
A: Yes, prior authorization of existing SSRI (other than generic fluoxetine) therapy is required. However, PA will be automatically approved so you can continue on the drug.
- Q: Will I need a new prescription order from my physician or psychiatrist to continue receiving the SSRI I am already taking?  
A: No, your current prescription order is all that is needed.
- Q: How do I obtain prior authorization?  
A: The pharmacy dispensing the SSRI obtains prior authorization for you.
- Q: How long will it take for the pharmacy to obtain PA?  
A: PA can usually be obtained while you wait for the prescription to be filled. The pharmacy uses the telephone to request the PA and immediately knows if the drug is covered for you.
- Q: This is my first prescription for an SSRI that is not generic fluoxetine. What do I need to do?  
A: To obtain prior authorization for you, the pharmacist needs to know why generic fluoxetine is not medically acceptable for you to use. You may inform the pharmacist of the reason, or you may ask that your doctor include the reason with the prescription order when it is written or called in to the pharmacy.
- Q: How often must PA be obtained?  
A: Prior authorization must be obtained each time your drug is changed (unless it is changed to generic fluoxetine), or at least yearly.

### **Prescriber Questions**

- Q: Do all SSRI's require prior authorization?  
A: No, generic fluoxetine does not require prior authorization. Only high-cost SSRI drugs require PA.
- Q: I have determined that a patient requires SSRI therapy other than generic fluoxetine. How do I obtain PA?  
A: The pharmacy dispensing the drug will obtain PA. You should provide information to the pharmacist indicating why generic fluoxetine is not medically appropriate for this patient, e.g., previous therapeutic failure, previous side effects, or drug-drug interaction(s) with another drug this patient is taking.
- Q: What medical reasons will result in PA approval for an SSRI other than generic fluoxetine?  
A: PA will be approved for a patient already stabilized on the prescribed SSRI, previous therapeutic failure of generic fluoxetine, previous side effects, or drug-drug interaction(s) with another drug the patient is taking.
- Q: I wish to change a patient from Paxil to Sertraline. Is PA required?  
A: Yes, all new or changed SSRI therapy other than generic fluoxetine requires prior authorization. You should provide information to the pharmacy indicating why generic fluoxetine is not medically appropriate for this patient.